

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) today praised the Maryland Legislature for overriding Governor Ehrlich's veto—effectively raising the state's minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$6.15 an hour.

"Today's override was a vote on behalf of Maryland's working families," Hoyer said. "The average family spends about \$34,920 a year to purchase just the basics –housing, groceries, healthcare, and childcare. Yet minimum wage workers who earn \$10,300 annually- have found it more and more difficult to make ends meet."

Hoyer again criticized Governor Ehrlich for opposing this modest increase.

"Once again, Governor Ehrlich has shown he is in lockstep with the misguided priorities of Republicans in Washington," Hoyer said. "Fortunately, the legislature rose above special interest politics and did what was best for Maryland families in need."

In December, Hoyer called on Congress to adopt legislation to increase the federal minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25 over two years. At a press conference, he released a report by the Center for Economic and Policy Research showing that 129,000 workers in Maryland would benefit from an increase.

Because of inflation, the failure to increase the minimum wage is not just a pay freeze, but a pay-cut.

The real value of the minimum wage is near its lowest point in 50 years. If the minimum wage in 2005 was worth what it was in 1968, it would be \$8.88 an hour -- not \$5.15.

"While the cost of living in our nation continues to skyrocket, Congressional Republicans insist on leaving the minimum wage frozen in place," Hoyer said. "I will continue to urge Congressional Republicans to enact a similar raise on the national level."

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